

By John F. Tierney and Aitzaz Ahsan
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One of us chairs a House of Representatives subcommittee tasked with oversight of U.S. foreign policy, and one of us languishes under house arrest after transfer from a Pakistani jail for the “heinous” and “seditious” crime of representing, in legal proceedings, the sacked chief justice of Pakistan’s Supreme Court.

As members of the political opposition in our respective countries and as lawyers firmly committed to the rule of law, we have a few questions for our heads of state:

— How will you address the increasing anti-Americanism in Pakistan in light of the growing, and not unjustified, perception among Pakistan’s democratic moderates that the United States is not willing to stand with the people of Pakistan against an increasingly authoritarian and anti-democratic government in Islamabad?

— How will you respond to the inevitable international condemnation of a parliamentary “election” in which journalists are muzzled; political parties are prohibited from campaigning; Pakistani military and intelligence services visibly enforce an atmosphere of intimidation; and opposition leaders are exiled, jailed or placed under house arrest?

— How do you expect to effectively compete against extremist ideology when U.S. education funding to Pakistan is one-fifteenth its military support and Pakistani funding for public education remains woefully inadequate? Thirteen million children ages 5 to 9 — out of 27 million total — are not enrolled in school at all, leaving them exposed to extremist mentors.

— How do you expect to combat the Taliban and al-Qaeda cancer spreading from Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas into the Northwest Frontier and Balochistan provinces when the military is busy pointing its guns at judges, lawyers, journalists, political opponents and human rights advocates?

— How do you expect to muster the political fortitude and legitimacy to fight extremist Taliban and al-Qaeda forces when you have alienated the center-left and center-right — the more secular components of Pakistani society?

The people of Pakistan and the people of the United States deserve honest answers to these vexing questions. They are long overdue.

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Documents and Links

- [Questions for Musharraf and Bush](#)